DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 441 799 SP 039 257

AUTHOR Weiner, Gaby; Kallos, Daniel
TITLE Positively Women: Professionalism and Practice in Teaching and Teacher Education.
PUB DATE 2000-04-00
NOTE 16p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 24-28, 2000).
PUB TYPE Non-Print Media (100) -- Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; *Females; *Feminism; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; Preservice Teacher Education; Teacher Educators; Teachers; Teaching (Occupation); *Women Faculty
IDENTIFIERS Europe; *Professionalism; Professionalization of Teaching

ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to understand recent changes in the professional status of teachers and teacher educators in Europe, discussing the contribution of women to teaching and teacher education and noting that the proportion of women in education professions is not regarded as disadvantageous or problematic. The paper discusses gendered concepts of professionalization and the various arguments proposed concerning the so-called feminization of teaching (and teacher education). In view of the largely negative perspectives, the paper highlights two aspects: (1) the material opportunities and possibilities for action in the public sphere offered to women by the education professions; and (2) the particular commitment of female teachers to educational values and to practice. The final section of the paper considers the position of women in teacher education, what implications the feminization of teaching has for them, and their responses. (Contains 33 references.) (Author/SM)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 441 799

Positively Women
Professionalism and Practice in Teaching and Teacher Education

Gaby Weiner and Daniel Kallós, Umeå University, Sweden

Paper presented to the symposium "Teacher Education in Europe: Current Tendencies and Prospects in a Comparative Perspective", at AERA in New Orleans April 24-28 2000

Abstract

This paper seeks to understand recent changes in the professional status of teachers and teacher educators in Europe. The title indicates awareness of the contribution of women to teaching and teacher education (viz. the education professions) and that we do not regard the proportion of women in the education professions as disadvantageous or problematic We discuss gendered concepts of professionalisation and the various arguments proposed concerning the so-called feminisation of teaching (and latterly teacher education). In view of the largely negative perspectives, we highlight two aspects: first, the material opportunities and possibilities for action in the public sphere offered to women by the education professions, and second, the particular commitment of women teachers to educational values and to 'practice'. The final section of the paper considers the position of women in teacher education, what implications the feminisation of teaching has for them and their responses.

The starting point for this paper is that hitherto explanatory theories and discussions about the numerical dominance of women in teaching and latterly teacher education have tended to focus on the negative aspects of women's presence. These may be grouped into two sets of arguments. The first is that women teachers' position needs to be viewed as indicative and representative of women in other sectors of the labour market viz. attracting low status, low pay, external control and proletarianisation (e.g. Apple, 1987: Dunscombe, 1987). The second, from more conservative commentators, is that women teachers are a hindrance to the mature development of the education professions because they lower status, salaries, and public regard. For them, an additional consequence of the feminisation of teaching is that it may even lead to school cultures, which attract resistance from boys to school learning as irrelevant. Curiously the conservative commentators who argue that the feminised classroom is bad for boys are also those who tend to advocate that women are needed in the home to properly 'mother' their sons and daughters.

We intend however to start the discussion from another viewpoint. We suggest instead that women entered teaching in the second half of the nineteenth century in many parts of Europe and the US at the beginning of the massification of education. Until then education had been predominantly organised by men for elite boys. With the expansion of education, middle-class women gained entry to education; first as governesses educating children in the home, and later, when other sectors of education expanded, as kindergarten and elementary teachers. In the second half of the nineteenth century, 'industrial' approaches to mass education such as the Bell and Lancaster schemes were replaced by classroom-based pedagogies which included 'home' skills education for girls who were now to be included in state education.

SP039257

D. Kallós

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

While male teachers remained predominant in elite and secondary education as it also expanded, women became an attractive proposition as teachers of younger children. Kindergarten and elementary teaching in turn drew women because it enabled them to gain payment for work outside the home and also to achieve public standing and recognition, at a time when there was much hostility to women working in the public sphere. Thus, various levels of elementary teaching attracted at different times, middle- and working class women and women from different ethnic and migrant groups because it was a job that was convenient and available and because it enabled them to keep the approval of their families and communities. Tallberg-Broman (1992) explains how the development of education work became more available to women in Sweden.

> Among such tasks was work concerned with reproduction; for example, the caring for and education of children. Here, jobs and professions were constructed which both attempted to gradually fill the emptiness created by the new construction of society as well as to develop and structure those reproductive duties with new meanings and new goals. Thus the job of kindergarten teacher was constructed. It symbolises the beginning of society's takeover of the reproductive functions of the home, which has been carried out – and structured – during the 20th century (Tallberg-Broman, 1992, p. 257).

The fact that the state, often with the help of male teachers and trade unions, exploited women teachers by keeping down female pay rates, says more about the nature of patriarchal relations than about the work of the women themselves. For example, again in Sweden, because of the success of women in gaining entry into elementary teaching, there was less interest expressed in the development of elementary teaching as a profession. This was particularly evident in the struggle for professional recognition of pre-school teachers with Froebelian ideas in the early decades of the twentieth century (Johansson, 1992).

Holmlund (1996) shows that while Swedish kindergarten teachers employed traditionally 'feminine' strategies in struggling to gain access to, and control over, day nurseries and other forms of pre-school provision, the end result was a devaluation of their achievements:

> However, the profession of being a pre-school teacher was in reality defined as a woman's natural task and it was ranked within the traditional hierarchy of gender. As women, the pre-school teachers thus found themselves in subordinate positions and, since their clients were the youngest children, they were placed at the bottom of the ladder of the teaching profession (Holmlund, 1996, p. 319).

Rather the professionalism project was more clearly linked to the expansion and development of subject teaching by men at higher levels of secondary schooling. This sustained the longstanding split between the mainly female lower grade teachers of the 'folkskola' (trained in seminaries) and the mainly male subject-based teachers of the 'realskola' and gymnasium (educated in the universities) (Florin, 1987). Evidence of this split can also be found in other European countries and in the USA as male teachers sought to establish their teaching identity through their subject and women, through their role as educator.

Using the above brief historical overview of the gendered origins of teaching as an introduction, this paper continues with a brief discussion of various approaches to professionalism, a concept that has occupied a central place in the literature on teachers and teacher educators.

We argue that ideas about professionalism are historically and culturally produced and thus have been employed strategically in the struggles between the sexes over 'the teacher's chair' (Florin, 1987). We then explore briefly, because they have been addressed at length elsewhere, some of the more popular somewhat negative ideas concerning teaching and teacher education as women's work.

The main part of our paper however concentrates on the impact that women have made on teaching, and what positive aspects they have brought to the education professions. However in so doing, we want to avoid accusations of essentialism. Our argument is not that women are 'naturally' good teachers or 'naturally' more committed to the caring professions than men; rather that the social and cultural conditions in which many women have found themselves have made teaching and other so-called caring professions more attractive and more do-able forms of work. Indeed we wish to pose an alternative question – what is it about men's social and cultural conditions which prevents them from entering the so-called caring professions? The final part of the paper concentrates on women teacher educators, what impact teaching-as-women's-work has had on them and how they have responded.

Debates about Professionalism

Much has been written about professionalism in general, and with regard to teaching in particular. This literature has largely ignored the importance of context and culture, giving the impression that ideas about professionalism are commonly held and unchanging. More recently there have been signs of change. For example, Densmore (1987) reports that professionalism has begun to be viewed as shifting and open to change.

> New critical analysis of the professions focus on the social, historical, and political context in which claims to professionalism are made. The concept of 'professionalism' is viewed as a term that has changed over time (Densmore, 1987, p.134).

This has led to new perspectives and new forms of analysis, of which this paper is a part.

Florin (1987) identifies three main approaches to the treatment of the phenomenon of professionalism. The first and most popular has been to identify *common features* of some of the most successful professions i.e. medicine, law, and then to generalise from these across other, mainly lower-regarded areas of professional work. Common features identified include professional autonomy, educational qualifications, shared knowledge base, commitment to vocation and to clients, and ethical norms. Where certain features are absent, for example, professional autonomy, arguments are put forward for the existence of 'semi-professions' as in the case of teachers (Etzioni,

1969). Significantly, though other features of professionalism such as ethics and vocation have been more associated with women's work, this has not been reflected in higher professional recognition of women, and indeed such characteristics have often been used *against* women to explain why they are prepared to put up with lower pay.

The second approach to professionalism has been to place the development of the profession in their *structural and historical context* 'so that the changes of industrial capitalism, the growth of the rational state and the development of bureaucracy has been the starting point of the analysis' (Florin, 1987, p.193). This has been more productive in enhancing understanding of the feminisation of teaching but has tended, with certain exceptions including Florin, to produce women in the education professions as passive victims of their inevitable gender fate.

The third approach has been to emphasise the *different strategies of each profession*, its power-base of specialised knowledge, its attempts at professional idealisation, and most importantly, each profession's exclusivity and ability to keep out others. This approach appears to have been less helpful to understanding women's impact and contribution to the education professions, however, since the evident inability of the education professions to claim exclusivity has often been attributed to the large number of women members.

Interestingly, a new development of the use of teacher professionalisation has been noted following recent moves towards deregulation and neo-liberalism in Sweden. Teacher professionalism in this context emerged as a government discourse aimed at 'cementing' or holding together disparate government policies and societal changes.

> We have noted that the decentralisation and governing through roles and results necessitated a relative upgrading of the teacher force. This in its turn implied that teachers were discussed as professionals and their relative autonomy was emphasised…
>
> The emphasis on the need of a highly qualified and professional teacher force during the eighties is, if it is to be regarded a part of a professionalisation process, not primarily as 'professionalisation project' demanded by and rooted within the teacher force. It is a project initiated from above (Kallós and Lundahl-Kallós, 1997, pp 155-156).

However generally, the fact that teaching and teacher's work have become largely female preoccupations has not been picked up in debates except by feminist scholars (e.g. Weiler, 1988; Middleton , 1993; Bicklen, 1995). The response of many in teacher education rather has been to ignore the fact where possible, or to view women's presence in the education professions as an intractable, insurmountable 'embarrassment' (Hollingsworth, 1995). MacDonald (1999) notes that this criticism applies beyond teaching to the range of caring professions, though recent attempts have been made to challenge this position.

> Historians of the so-called 'semi-professions' of teaching, nursing and social work have shifted their emphases during the last decade from focusing on the limitations of professionals in female 'ghettos' to exploring the proto-feminist implications of all-female professions. Indeed as early as 1982 historians Joan

> Jacobs Brumberg and Nancy Tomes had noted the failure by scholars to critically analyse these gendered occupations, thus failing to incorporate a crucial element in the modern evolution of the professions: the entry of middle-class women into the professional milieu (MacDonald, 1999, p. 430).

The next section of the paper discusses the ramifications of this seemingly complex and paradoxical situation

Pessimistic Perceptions of Women in the Education Professions

In this section we summarise some of the arguments as outlined above which have been used to problematise women's presence in the education professions. We have already looked critically at several, for example, that the high number of women in the education professions has led to lower status, lower salaries, lack of autonomy, indeed to their status as semi-professions (Etzioni, 1969). Apple (1987) points to the women's disadvantage in both horizontal and vertical divisions of labour:

> First women's work is related to a *vertical* division of labor in which women as a group are disadvantaged relative to men in pay and in the conditions under which they labor. Second, such work is involved in the *horizontal* division of labor where women are concentrated in particular kinds of work (Apple, 1987, p. 58).

The close correspondence of the "the kinds of paid work women tend to do" and the division of labour in the family has, it is argued, a long history in education (Apple, 1987, p. 59), the outcome of which has been its association with low pay and external control. The following quote illustrates the direct *causal* link made by some between women's presence and lower status:

> The prevalence of women in classrooms has contributed to pressure to strengthen bureaucratic controls over teaching and has given teaching the image of a lower-skilled profession. (Sedlak & Schlossman, 1986, quoted in Darling-Hammond, 1990, p. 267)

However we distance ourselves from perceptions of the low status of professional knowledge in education and the lack of respect for, and control over, education disciplines as due to the presence of women. In her review of sociological work on women and teaching, Acker calls this the "blame-the-woman" approach (Acker, 1994, p. 77). She quotes, by way of an illustration, the views of Simpson and Simpson, who contributed a chapter to the 1969 Etzioni collection (Etzioni, 1969). They assert that because of women's primary attachment to the family, their psychological work orientation is different to that of men.

> Women's stronger competing attachments to their family roles .... make them less likely than men to develop colleague reference group orientations. For these reasons and because they often share the general cultural norm that women should defer to men, women are more willing than men to accept bureaucratic controls imposed on them in semi-professional organisations, and less likely to seek a genuinely professional status (Simpson & Simpson 1969, quoted in Acker, 1994, pp. 77-8).

Another criticism with a long history is that the high proportion of women in teaching disadvantages boys. As early as 1956 in his book *Education as a Profession*, Lieberman (1965) wrote that boys who lack suitable male models at school were more likely to end up in pool halls or as gang members. More recently in Finland, arguments both from politicians and educators suggest while the feminisation of classroom life may aid girls' academic development, it leads also to weaker discipline and lack of male role-models thus lowering boys' and young men's motivation and academic performance (reported in Lahelma, 2000). Recent strategies taken to redress the situation include advertising campaigns to attract 'higher quality', male entrants into teaching, rewarding teacher education institutions which attract more men and funding a number of curriculum projects focusing specifically on boys (all to be found in the UK currently).

A useful summary of the issues raised in this section of the paper is provided by Acker (1994) who is critical of six prevailing assumptions about women as teachers: a deficit model of women; low regard for the their intellectual capacities; a tendency to see women exclusively in terms of family roles; a poor sense of history with regard to conceptions about change; an oversimplified model of causality; and a pervasive ideology of individual choice. However what Acker fails to emphasise sufficiently are the complexities arising from differences in gender distribution of teachers at various levels of schooling and education. Hence, perceptions about women teachers who work in the female-dominated kindergarten or the male-dominated gymnasium need to be understood as influenced also by the professional, cultural and historical contexts of the educational sector in which they are located.

Positive Perceptions of Women in the Education Professions

Here we explore less familiar arguments for why women's contribution to the education professions should be regarded more positively. We offer a number of arguments, for example: women's contribution to the maintenance of the welfare state; the opportunities granted for women to achieve well-paid continuous and fulfilling work (certainly as far as other areas of women's work are concerned); possibilities for increased social mobility and social standing; and opportunities for women to develop professional identities and public roles as educators and citizens.

Additionally, in terms of professional practice, we explore claims that women may actually be better teachers than men, not because of any innate or biological abilities, but because they have tended to be more socialised than men into nurturing and maintaining interpersonal relationships, and providing a 'caring' environment in which young people can flourish. For example, Noddings (1994) claims that women are more likely to develop 'relational ethics'.

> As an ethical orientation, caring has often been characterised as feminine because it seems to arise more naturally out of woman's experience than man's. When this ethical orientation is reflected on and technically elaborated, we find that this is a form of what might be called *relational ethics*. A relational ethic remains tightly tied to experience because its deliberations focus

> on the human beings involved in the situation under consideration and their relations to each other (Noddings, 1994, p. 173, original italics).

Another form of relational ethics has been identified in a study of eight 'outstanding' women teachers of predominantly African American, low-income elementary schools in Northern California. Five of the teachers were African-American and three were white. Criteria for teaching excellence (from parents) included "being accorded respect by the teacher, student enthusiasm toward school and academic tasks, and student attitudes towards themselves and others' (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 207). Ladson-Billings found that these teachers were able to challenge the assumption that feelings of professional low status worsened when working with low status students. They did this by creating a specific 'culturally relevant pedagogy' whereby they:

- believed that all students were capable of academic success,
- saw their pedagogy as art – unpredictable, always in the process of becoming,
- saw themselves as members of the community,
- saw teaching as a way to give back to the community,
- believed in a Freirian notion of 'teaching as mining' or pulling knowledge out (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 215).

Ladson-Billings argues that these teachers consciously struggled to achieve the three necessary criteria for what she identifies as cultural relevance in teaching: 'an ability to develop students academically, a willingness to nurture and support cultural competence, and the developed of a sociopolitical or critical consciousness' (Ladson-Billings, 1998, p. 220).

Feminist teachers can also be viewed as having developed a critical consciousness of women-identified capabilities. Their consciousness of unequal power relationships between the sexes inside and outside the school enables them to reflect on how and in what ways women can make a difference without falling into essentialising and psychologising traps. In her study of North American feminist teachers, Weiler (1988) found that they had a commitment to critique and analysis, as well as to contributing to the creation of a more just society.

> These teachers do not see teaching in terms of quantifiable results, test scores, or mastery of 'facts'. Instead, they are describing the classroom as a place where consciousness is interrogated, where meanings are questioned, and means of analysis and criticism of the social world as well as of a text or assignment are encouraged. For these teachers, the goal of teaching is grounded in a respect for the human value and cultural worlds of their students, and what is encouraged is the development of both criticism and self-criticism (Weiler, 1988, pp. 114-5)

In a similar vein, Bicklen (1995) describes how the feminist teachers in her study resisted and problematised the construction of the woman teacher as 'feminine' and teaching as 'maternal' work. She notes however that the aim was not to create opposition or conflict:

> The teachers did not set up the feminist and feminine oppositionally to each other. Both were part of the discourse of gender. Feminism, for example, critiqued not the maternal but *social discourse about the maternal*, which relegated maternal thinking to the margins (Bicklen, 1995, p. 179, our italics).

Several recent European research studies have likewise illuminated new ways of thinking about teaching as women's work. In their recent study of Spanish female infant school teachers, Zufiaurre and Pellejero (2000) found deep contradictions in how the women view their professional lives. On the one hand, they reported self-esteem and satisfaction from being able to be professionally active, yet on the other, they emphasised their stress, overwork and under-value as infant school teachers.

> Contradictions between their private and public domains give these women a sense of being in charge, of taking care, instead of being considered primarily as professionals. The most common feature of the teachers and nurses in our twin studies was their intrinsic vocational commitment which we suggest is used by society as an emotional 'mattress'. At the same time, the social recognition of women's professional roles does not match the social responsibility which these professions demand. This drives us into a territory where it is difficult to separate the idea of professional or non-professional tasks when they are directed at emotional and existential levels (Zufiaurre & Pellejero, 2000).

While the women in this Spanish study reported stress and low esteem for many of the reasons cited earlier in this paper, they also reported drawing immense satisfaction from being professionally and publically active. Not only that, but they also argued that the work of teaching has a positive impact on their non-professional or private lives. As Zufiaurre and Pellejero (2000) put it:

> Positive factors of these professions may be observed in relation to what we call 'labour compromises', that is being useful, having a heightened inner life quality and being of some economic value.

The nature of this heightened inner life is further explored by Rönnerman's (1997) study of Swedish teachers' work in a number of development primary school development projects. Rönnerman (1997) also argues for a different concept of appreciation of women's work and of career, drawing on her work with three female elementary teachers, Gunilla, Gun and Eva:

> The career concept cannot be used vertically… It has to have a horizontal meaning. It must include values and personal development, collaboration, possibilities of self-esteem and informal influence. It is obviously such a horizontal career Gunilla, Gun and Eva strive for. They do not want to change job. Through their development work they have found career paths that are horizontal (Rönnerman, 1997, p. 245).

Actually, many of the women in Rönnerman's (1997) study wanted to increase their abilities and competency as teachers, rather than move out of the classroom up into more senior managerial jobs or leave the profession altogether. They gained enormous satisfaction from their work in the classroom and believed that they had much to learn

from the in-service projects with which they were involved. Rather than seeking promotion, their expressed wish was to continue with such forms of professional and personal development in the future. Teaching, for them, allowed for the fusing of their life experiences as individuals with the competencies they gained in their professional lives, giving them a profound sense of 'wholeness' as people.

Interestingly, a recent Finnish study suggests that school pupils are also more likely to be interested in what their teachers are like in the classroom than in whether they are men or women. While the majority of Finnish primary school teachers who answered a questionnaire on gender expressed the wish for 'gender balance' in schools - that is, having approximately the same number of male and female teachers, Lalhema (2000) found that their pupils thought differently:

> Traits that both girls and boys value in teachers are qualities that are not specifically female or male. Characters like fairness, sense of humour, considerateness and gentleness were mentioned by several girls and boys, and were attributed to their male as well as female teachers. Teachers' qualities as teachers seemed to be central, not their personal traits. Both girls and boys respected teachers who can teach, who use varying methods and are helpful. They are attracted to teachers who do not shout, do not give too much home-work and are not too strict, but who nevertheless make sure that the students work (Lalhema, 2000).

To summarise this section of the paper, we suggest that women teachers as a group have offered important insights into different categories of school teaching and classroom practice: for example, in their satisfaction in working in the public sphere, their promotion of caring and relational ethical standpoints, their commitment to analysis, critique and social justice (as antiracists and feminists), and their wish to develop good practice in the classroom rather than outside or upwards in the school hierarchy.

However the studies we have drawn on have mainly been of elementary or pre-school teachers. There has been a relative lack of attention to gender, feminisation and subject teaching although a number of studies have investigated gender and subject studies focusing on students (e.g. Boaler, 1997). As a consequence, the professional implications for secondary teachers of the masculinisation of certain subjects (such as in science) and feminisation of others (such as in languages or arts) has yet to be explored. Also the gendered origins and implications of the discourses of 'deficiency' that we have described in this paper, need to be more thoroughly investigated; such as that there are 'too many women in teaching' or that are 'too few women in science' or that women are somehow deficient as teachers of boys.

Women Teacher Educators

Once thought of as a no-go area for researchers, intellectuals and ambitious politicians, debates about teacher education have become more prominent in across Europe and the US during the 1990s (Zeichner, 1999; SOU, 1999; Buchberger et al, 2000). This is due in part to continuing support for human capital theories linking investment in education to economic productivity (Woodhall, 1987). Thus, the extent to which teacher educators are able to provide their students with the appropriate knowledge,

skills and experience to teach children who will become the entrepreneurs and workers of the twenty-first century, has become a key aspect of education policy-making and popular debate. But this attention has not been without its problems. In many countries, teacher education has become the target of extensive government reform on the basis of criticism about the narrowness and conservatism of past practices. Criticisms have also come from other educators who have conceived of teacher education as 'folkloric' (McWilliam, 1994) or as a barren intellectual endeavour. Giroux & McLaren (1987, p. 267), for example, accuse teacher education institutions of being 'damagingly bereft of both social conscience and social consciousness'. Who then are these beleaguered teacher educators?

In her fascinating discussion of the provenance of teacher education in the US published in 1987, Schneider (1987) notes that studies over the previous 25 years showed that the majority of faculty were 'men, white and middle-aged' despite the fact that women constituted the majority of elementary and secondary teachers. Similar characteristics regarding race, sex and age were also to be found at 'masters level institutions' (Schneider, 1987, p. 220).

In contrast, the UK has a different pattern of involvement of women in teacher education. In the early part of the twentieth century, teacher education was an attractive option for clever, middle-class girls because it fitted well with the prevalent female discourses of the time, of maternity, respectability and conformity. Likewise, clever working-class girls became pupil-teachers. But while women predominated numerically in teacher education, 'they did so in a relatively powerless and underfunded sector *where few men chose to work*' (Maguire & Weiner, 1996, p. 721, our italics).

However in the post World War II period and particularly after the 1960s following demands for a more highly educated and flexible workforce, there was a perceived need for more 'qualified' teacher educators. Consequently women were pushed out of the profession and began to disappear as principals of colleges and from relatively powerful positions in teacher education. The discourse of teacher education at this time became masculine, emphasising innovation, expansion, entrepeneurism and academic prowess over the maternalised caring discourses of previous decades.

Four distinct trends mark recent teacher education patterns. First, there are relatively few women in influential intellectual or management positions. Second women are differently positioned in teacher education both structurally and in their everyday professional lives. This is well-illustrated by a quote from a female teacher educator who participated in Maguire's 1993 study of the day to day lives of teacher educators in an English Catholic teacher training college.

> Simple things on the corridor that I have noticed, men will not interrupt men but if there's a conversation going on between a man and a woman, a man will think nothing of coming straight into the conversation, two women talking together, a man will think nothing of coming straight through the conversation. Happens all the time and I get very tired because I think it's rude. (Maguire, 1993 quoted in Maguire and Weiner, 1996, p. 731).

Third, recent managerial discourses have promoted masculinised orientation and practices in teacher education, often relegating women to the sidelines when it comes to

policy-making and power. The fourth trend concerns the ways in which women teacher educators are 'constructed' by their male colleagues and more generally – either as 'maternal' (female-lecturer-as-mother) or as simply not quite good enough, or as 'eccentric' (meaning that they are 'unnatural', abnormal and undesirable examples of womanhood).

As higher education has expanded, men have chosen other disciplinary areas in the university, leaving teacher education as a more productive space within which women can flourish. For example at our own university, Umeå University in Sweden, there are now roughly equal numbers of male and female women lecturers in teacher education though conventional gender divisions persist; men remain over-represented in mathematics and science education and women, in pre-school, early years and special needs. We argue that as women have raised their professional aspirations and also as more education opportunities have become available to them, teacher education has become a more attractive area of work. However this is not to deny that other areas of the university remain heavily gender divided, both vertically in terms of subjects and disciplines and horizontally, in terms of occupational seniority.

'Fear of Feminism' in Teacher Education

We are also interested in how gender issues have been treated in teacher education, especially concerning perspectives on teaching as women's work. Despite the fact that we now have a substantial number of women in teacher education, at least compared with other higher education subject areas, teacher educators have not taken up the feminist challenge to conventional knowledge that has become familiar in other academic and professional disciplines over the last few decades. What is more, there seems to have been a 'fear of feminism' as teacher educators have shied away from what may be regarded as a contentious and 'political' topic. Focusing on gender is often interpreted as anti-male and divisive despite the evident influence of gender factors in school and university classrooms (Weiner, 2000). Whether feminism is feared because it is too political, too middle-class (as in Sweden), too theoretical or too risky to an overworked and low status profession, has yet to be determined.

Hollingsworth (1995) identifies five hypotheses for the problematic nature of gender in teacher education in the United States:

- it is women's work and therefore its gendered characteristics appear 'normal';
- there is no more space available in the crowded curriculum for gender;
- gender is being taught already, as part of courses on diversity and multiculturalism;
- 'there is no need' – current teacher research approaches are adequate;
- it is a taboo subject, rather too emotional, controversial or sensitive to be dealt with in the 'neutral' and 'objective' teacher education classroom (Hollingsworth, 1995).

It is therefore not surprising that gender has been a low priority for teacher educators as is indicated by Berge's recent survey of Swedish publications on gender and teacher education between 1984 and 1998 (Berge, 1999). Despite Sweden's high reputation regarding gender issues, the survey revealed as few as 12 studies and re-

ports, for the 14 years covered by the survey, most of these of an introductory nature (Berge, 1999).

Significantly, where gender perspectives have emerged in teacher education, they have tended to focus on practice issues and to link gender with other forms of educational inequality and injustice. This suggests that feminist perspectives in teacher education may offer a different stand-point from those found within education more generally. For example, a 1993 collection on race and gender issues in British teacher education (Siraj-Blatchford, 1993) included chapters on: student-teachers attitudes towards gender and racial equality; issues for black teachers; gender issues in physical education; racist and sexist experiences of student teachers in school; and several chapters arguing for changes in the teacher education curriculum and administration. The emphasis in the book was on how best pragmatically to challenge sexism and racism in teacher education and among students.

It has become clear, therefore, that with notable exceptions (e.g. Tallberg-Broman, 1991; Johansson, 1992; Siraj-Blatchford, 1993; McWilliam, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1995), there has been a general absence of a feminist or gender discourse within teacher education. This has meant that teacher educators have not been able to utilise the theoretical and praxis insights of feminism to challenge the derogation of the largely female education professions, or to explore the contradictions between professionalism and women's work mentioned earlier in this paper. As a consequence they have failed to develop a broad overview and theoretical perspective on gender issues, 'borrowing' instead, theories from outside education or dealing with gender issues at the most immediate and superficial levels.

Conclusions

In this paper, we have raised a number of issues connected with women in teaching and teacher education, which go some way to challenging previous discouraging conceptions of the implications about the so-called feminisation of the education professions. The title to this paper *Positively Women* denotes that we do not find such approaches particularly helpful. Rather we have tried to offer an overview of the full range of debates regarding teaching as women's work, to avoid 'blaming the victim' and to point to some of the ways in which the presence of women may be regarded more positively. However we are also critical of women (and men) in teacher education who have failed to take up the feminist challenge to disciplines, knowledge and practices, of developing a trenchant analysis and critique of their specific disciplinary histories, cultures and practices. If they had done so, they might have avoided the accusations of lacking social consciousness mentioned earlier (Giroux & McLaren, 1987).

We have also emphasised that women teachers should not be viewed as a single, unified category: nor is it sufficient to see them *only* as women. Their involvement at different levels of education with different subjects in different historical periods and countries has resulted in a more complex sense of professional identity and competence than current discourses of 'deficiency' would suggest. We have also noted a lack of discussion and analysis of gender issues by teacher educators, or much evidence of strategies to challenge prevailing sexist and common-sense assumptions among students and colleagues

At Umeå university, we have tried to develop a number of such strategies. One has been to appoint women to senior levels in teacher education and to encourage change from the top downwards into schools as well as from the bottom upwards, from schools into the university. Another has been to emphasise the equivalence of teacher education to other university disciplines and areas, and the consequence importance of research and reflection for teacher educators. A third has been to identify gender as an important area of theorising and research in teacher education. And fourth has been the establishment of a 'gender seminar' with the aim of developing plans of action, research projects and student materials which will establish some sort of framework and knowledge base, from which we can progress further. We hope in the future to be in a position to report on the outcomes of these and other strategies and to reflect on the practice and epistemological progress (or otherwise) that we have made.

Correspondence
Gaby Weiner & Daniel Kallós
Teacher Education, Umeå University, S 901 87 Umeå, Sweden
tel: +46 (0) 90 786 7185/6765 fax: +46 (0) 90 786 6671/6693
email: gaby.weiner@educ.umu.se/daniel.kallos@educ.umu.se

References

Acker S. (1994) *Gendered Education*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Apple M. (1987) 'Gendered Teaching, Gendered Labor', in Popkewitz T., (ed.) *Critical Studies in Teacher Education*, London, Falmer Press

Berge, B-M. (1999) *Publications about Gender and Teacher Education in Sweden 1984-1998*. Paper presented at TNTEE Conference, Lisbon, Portugal, May 1999.

Bicklen S. K. (1995) *School Work: Gender and Cultural Construction of Teaching*, New York, Teachers College Press

Boaler J. (1997) *Experiencing School Mathematics: teaching styles, sex and setting*, Buckingham, Open University Press

Buchberger F., Campos B.P., Kallos D. & Stephensson J. (2000) *Green Paper on Teacher Education in Europe*, TNTEE

Darling-Hammond L. (1990) 'Teachers and Teaching: signs of a changing profession', in Houston R.W. (ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*, New York, Macmillan

Densmore K. (1987) 'Professionalism, Proletarianisation and Teacher Work', in Popkewitz T., (ed.) *Critical Studies in Teacher Education*, London, Falmer Press

Etzioni A. (ed.) (1969) *The Semi-Professions and Their Organisations*, New York, Free Press

Florin C. (1987) *Who Should Sit in the Teacher's Chair? The Processes of Feminisation and Professionalisation among Swedish Elementary School Teachers 1860-1906*, Department of History, Umeå University, Sweden

Giroux H. & McLaren P. (1987) 'Teacher Education as a Counter-public Sphere: notes towards redefinition', in Popkewitz T., (ed.) *Critical Studies in Teacher Education*, London, Falmer Press

Hollingsworth S. (1995) 'The "Problem" of Gender in Teacher Education', *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 8, 2, p. 3-11

Holmlund K. (1996) *Let the children come to us: the pre-school teachers and the struggle for the institutions for young children*, Umeå, Pedagogiska institutionen, Umeå universitet

Johansson J-K (1992) *Metodikämnet i förskollärutbildning. Bidrag till en traditionsbestämning*, Göteborg Studies in Educational Sciences: 86, Göteborg, Göteborg universitet

Kallós D. & Lundahl-Kallós L. (1997) 'Recent Changes in Teachers' Work in Sweden: Professionalization or What? in Kallós D. & Lindblad S., (eds), *New Policy Contexts for Education: Sweden and the United Kingdom*, Umeå, Umeå University, 140-168

Ladson-Billings G. (1998) ' Towards a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy', in Beyer L.E. & Apple M., (eds.) *The Curriculum: Problems, Politics and Possibilities*, New York, State University of New York Press, 201-227

Lahelma E. (2000) 'Lack of Male Teachers – Problem for Students or Teachers' *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 8, 2 (in press)

Lieberman M. (1956) *Education as a Profession*, Englewood Cliffs NJ, Prentice-Hall

MacDonald V.M. (1999) 'The Paradox of Bureaucratization: new views on progressive era teachers and the development of a woman's profession', *History of Education Quarterly*, 39, 4, 427-453

McWilliam E. (1994) *In Broken Images: Feminist Tales for a Different Teacher Education*, New York, Teachers College Press

Maguire M. & Weiner G. (1996) 'The Place of Women in Teacher Education (UK)' , in M. O. Valente, A. Bárrios, A. Gasper & V. D. Teodoro (eds.) *Teacher Training and Values Education*, Lisbon, ATEE, 713-737

Middleton S. (1993) *Educating Feminists*, New York, Teachers College Press

Noddings N. (1994) 'An Ethic of Caring and its Implications for Instructional Arrangements', in Stone L., (ed.) *The Education Feminism Reader*, New York, Routledge

Rönnermann K. (1997) 'The Primary School Teacher as an Agent of Change', in Kallós D. & Lindblad S., (eds), *New Policy Contexts for Education: Sweden and the United Kingdom*, Umeå, Umeå University, 236-250

Schneider B. L. (1987) 'Tracing the Provenance of Teacher Education' in Popkewitz T., (ed.) *Critical Studies in Teacher Education*, London, Falmer Press

Siraj-Blatchford I., (ed.) (1993) *'Race', Gender and the Education of Teachers*, Buckingham, Open University Press

SOU (1999) *Att lära och leda: En lärarutbildning för samverkan och utveckling*, Stockholm, Regeringskansliet

Tallberg-Broman, I. (1991) *När arbetet var lönen.* (*When work is its own reward: A study from the perspective of women's history, of the kindergarten teacher as public educator.*) Malmö, Amqvist & Wiksell International

Weiler K. (1988) *Women Teaching for Change: gender, class and power*. Massachusetts, Bergin & Garvey Publishers Inc.

Weiner G. (2000) 'A Critical Review of Gender and Teacher Education in Europe', *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 8, 2 (in press)

Woodhall M, (1987) 'Human Capital Concepts', in Psacharopoulos G., (ed.), *Economics of Education: Research and Studies*, 21-4

Zeichner K. (1999) 'The New Scholarship in Teacher Education', *Educational Researcher*, December, 4-15

Zufiaurre B. & Pellejero L. (2000) 'Women Infant-school Women Teachers in Spain: how does society and how do they consider their professional role' *Pedagogy, Culture & Society*, 8, 2 (in press)